

not there also can save a grower tremendously. As chemicals increase in price, growers will become more aware of pest management strategies and will use them to produce quality crops.

RURAL CRIME: A NEW FARM PROBLEM

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Problem

Rural crime is now growing at a more rapid rate than urban crime, with vandalism and theft being the most common crimes committed in rural communities. Rural people should be especially concerned about this growing problem. One reason is that for many rural areas the distance between homes means fewer neighbors to watch out for unusual or suspicious activities. Secondly, rural law enforcement agencies have jurisdiction over large geographic areas which makes patrolling and quick response to calls difficult. A third reason is that our improved road systems make most rural areas easily accessible to non-residents. For these and many other reasons, learning the skills of how to be a good witness takes on new importance.

We all can be good witnesses and help our neighbors. It is important that we know when and how to report suspicious activity.

When to Report a Crime

Consider the following situation. You see a van back into your neighbor's driveway. Two men get out and go toward the house. You know your neighbor is away on vacation, and you have never seen the men or van before. What should you do first?

1. Call a relative of this neighbor.
2. Try to contact your vacationing neighbor.
3. Call a friend and ask him/her to go with you to investigate.
4. Notify the police or sheriff and provide a description of the van, the men and the activity.

The answer should be easy: 4. CALL THE POLICE. Unfortunately, people who have found themselves in this position often choose 1, 2, or 3. Why? Probably because most people have a reluctance to call the police. They feel they may be overreacting or that their perception is incorrect.

The best "rule of thumb" is if the situation looks suspicious, then it is suspicious. Notify your local law enforcement agency. Trust your judgment. You know your neighborhood better than anyone else. You know the people, the vehicles and activities that are normal to your community. You are the expert. If the situation appears unusual, let the police know about it.

How to Report a Crime

If you do observe a suspicious or criminal action, how do you report it to insure the best response? First, keep the number of the police or sheriff posted by your phone. This will save time.

Law enforcement agencies receive numerous telephone calls each day. Some are urgent and some are not. Let the dispatcher know immediately the nature of your call. For example, in the previous illustration it would be appropriate to say, "My neighbor is on vacation, and I think their house is being burglarized!" This will allow the dispatcher to give your call priority and send a patrol car to investigate while additional information is obtained. Usually, you will be asked:

- Your name, address and telephone number;
- The location of the suspicious activity;
- To recount what you saw;
- Description of the vehicles and individuals;
- License plate numbers;
- Whether they have left the area; and if so, the time and direction they left.

Stay on the telephone until you have provided the necessary information. Do not hang up and try to investigate on your own. You are more important as an information source to the police. Stay by your phone in case they need additional information.

Getting a Good Description

A good description of the vehicle and suspects is often the most valuable information you can provide to law enforcement. The more you can remember, the more helpful it will be. The most important points to remember about the suspects are:

- color of hair, eyes and skin
- facial features
- approximate age
- height and body build
- any unusual markings (scars, tattoos, etc.) or mannerisms
- speech peculiarities or accents
- jewelry
- clothing

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Physical features and mannerisms are more important than clothing, because the latter can be changed or discarded, especially caps and jackets. Jewelry is less likely to be discarded.

The best way to get a description is to start at the head and work down, trying to remember as much as possible. Especially remember anything that may stand out such as the shape of the face, body build, etc.

Be a Watchful Neighbor

The most valuable resource a community has in preventing crimes is an active and involved group of citizens. If you suspect a crime is being committed, do not hesitate to call the police.

Dealing with a Specific Problem

The theft of gasoline and diesel fuel is the most common theft that occurs in rural areas. The ever-increasing price of fuel will probably add to this already serious problem. Even if the rate of fuel theft remains the same as in the past, the rural resident will experience double the dollar loss due to the price per gallon increase in fuels. Most fuel theft could be prevented if a few simple and relatively inexpensive suggestions are followed.

Lock Your Tank

Without a doubt, the single most important thing you can do to stop fuel theft is to lock your fuel tank. A good padlock is a wise investment. A quality padlock with a 7/16" case hardened steel shackle is recommended. Make sure it has a heel and toe locking feature which will make it more difficult to open if it is cut. Some padlocks are made so the key cannot be removed unless the lock is locked. This is a desirable feature since it insures the lock has been properly secured and is a good reminder to lock your fuel tank immediately after you are finished. A good padlock will cost you as little as ten gallons of fuel at today's fuel prices.

There are three basic types of means of dispensing fuel from storage tanks: electrically operated pump, manually operated pump, and gravity-fed. All three types should be secured at the fuel cut-off valve located at the opening of the tank to prevent siphoning. Locking the nozzle and hose alone will not prevent theft, and may even add to your loss if the hose is cut to obtain the fuel. In addition, if you have an electrically operated pump on your tank, make sure the control switch is located in a locked building or in your house and that you turn off the electricity when you are not using your fuel tank.

If you buy a new padlock, check near the keyway for numbers. Some padlocks have the serial number for the key printed there. After you copy down the number for your records, remove the numbers from the lock. This will prevent others from using the serial number to trace the type of key on the lock.

Combination locks are convenient but provide little security. They are easily manipulated open and are very vulnerable to cutting or pounding.

Quality locks are available at most hardware stores or bicycle shops.

Location of the Fuel Tank

Often the primary consideration for locating your fuel tanks is convenience. Convenience certainly is important but what is often convenient for you, is equally convenient for the thief. If your tank is located above ground, an ideal placement would be where the tank is visible from the house but concealed from the roadway. The further the tank is from the road, the better. Most thieves will think twice about stealing when they do not have an easy route if discovered.

If you have more than one tank, try to cluster them in the same area. This will simplify observation and make it easier to fence or alarm the tanks if these procedures become necessary.

The best location for a fuel tank is underground. Being underground makes your tank less visible and much more difficult to steal from. However, it also adds to the installation cost and may not always be practical.

If you have both diesel fuel and gasoline tanks, use a color code system to identify the contents rather than labeling them. Make it as difficult as possible for the thief to identify his target.

Lights

Lights, if properly installed, can provide excellent security at a low cost. Lights should be placed so that they illuminate the general area surrounding the tank. Avoid placing lights so that they shine directly onto the tank. This will cause the tank to be silhouetted and stand out to passersby. Also, be sure that your lights do not point directly toward your house. This will have a blinding effect and make observation of your tanks difficult.

An effective security light is one which allows you to see not only the immediate area near your fuel tank, but

also illuminates a wider area surrounding the tank. Some lights are brighter than others. A bright light, although effectively illuminating the immediate area around the tank, provides too sharp of a contrast to allow you to see into the surrounding area. Lighting experts recommend a "soft" light which avoids a sharp contrast between darkness and the illuminated area.

Two types of "soft" lights are the mercury vapor and sodium vapor lamps. Both have the additional advantages of being long burning (average lamp life is 18,000 to 24,000 hours) and of operating at a low hourly cost, as compared to other types of lighting systems.

Fences

It is a good idea to fence the area around your fuel tanks. If you have an outbuilding in which you store tools and other valuable equipment, you might consider locating your gas tank close to the outbuilding and erecting a security fence around the area. This creates a secure compound with two levels of security--the fence and then the locks on the tank and building. These two levels of security should deter all but the most determined thief.

Gates should be locked with the same quality padlocks used to secure your gas tank. Good locks combined with 3/8" thick hardened alloy steel chains will provide a good security for your gates.

For Further Information

Contact a crime prevention officer in your local sheriff or police department. Other brochures on specific rural crime prevention aids may be obtained by contacting: National Rural Crime Prevention Center, 2120 Fyffe Road, Columbus, OH 43210.

TO PROMOTE GROWTH OF YOUNG TREES

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We mulched our orchards with hay for many years. We abandoned mulching five years ago because of increases in wages and the price of hay.

With the onsurge of the round bale, the past couple of years Ken (my brother who manages the orchards) started talking about all those "round bales" going to waste alongside many fields. We purchased a used Hesston Shredder for \$4,500 (cost new about \$6,000) that is built to chop large, round bales. We offered farmers \$3 to \$5 per bale and soon, we had more hay than we could use.

A five-man crew, two tractors and the shredder are used in the mulching operation. One man delivers bales to the shredder, one operates the shredder which drops the shredded hay behind the machine, and three men fork the mulch under the trees. The crew can shred 50 round bales per day which will mulch five acres of 15- to 18-year-old trees at 75 trees per acre. The cost is approximately \$1.50 to \$2.00 per tree. When mulching 2- to 5-year-old trees, the cost would be about 50¢ per tree.

The entire process could be operated with just one person, if desired, to further reduce costs.

Mulching is our supplement to irrigation. We are able to maintain uniform moisture in the root zone. The mulch also keeps the soil cool and loose on the surface. We generally receive typical ight rains during summers, and the soil in the root zone soaks up and holds the moisture. Without mulch, the rain water runs off the hard baked surface or quickly dries out from the hot sun.

The cost of mulching with large round bales is affordable. I believe it is less than half the cost of irrigation per acre.

HOW TO OBTAIN UNIFORM PERFORMANCE WITH TRICKLE IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

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INTRODUCTION

The number of acres under trickle irrigation in Michigan has grown significantly over the past 5 years. Estimates now suggest there are over 40,000 acres under trickle irrigation in Michigan. Along with the increased acreage, a larger and larger variety of crops are now being grown using trickle irrigation. In Michigan, trickle irrigation is used on such horticultural crops as peaches, cherries, apples, grapes, blueberries, raspberries, tomatoes and melons. The crops respond with either increased yields or vegetative growth as a result of trickle irrigation.

A number of significant questions have been asked during the past year relating to trickle irrigation system performance. For example, how does a grower estimate trickle irrigation system performance; how can we guarantee system performance on a newly designed trickle irrigation system; how can we improve system performance on an existing trickle irrigation system; and finally, what is the